

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Task Forces
May 2017

What are Task Forces

- A task force is a group of people appointed to help the Council make sound decisions and shape or influence policy.

Serving on Task Forces

- Nominated by Mayor or individual Council Member
 - Some nominations are as a board representative/stakeholder
 - Followed by a quorum vote of Council

Obtaining Member Contact Information

- The Boards and Commissions Team in the Clerk's Office will collect all appointee contact information and provide it to the task force liaison.
- Any changes to this information should be relayed to both the liaison and the Clerk's Office.



Boards & Commissions Information Center



Terms of Office

- Member terms will run from the date their appointment was approved by Council to the date the final report is submitted.
- The task force is automatically dissolved upon submission of the final report.
- If any resignations are reported, please find out the effective date of the member's resignation and send that information to the BC Coordinators.

Task Force Meetings

- Meeting locations must be facilities where the meeting may be recorded, is open to the public/all ages and that have ADA accessibility.

Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA)

- All task forces must comply with the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA).
- TOMA requires:
 - Meetings of governmental bodies be open to the public.
 - Agendas be posted publicly at least 72 hours prior to meeting and include notice of the date, hour, place, and subject of each meeting.
 - A quorum of members be present to begin meeting.

Task Forces

- City Code Section 2-1-3 *Boards Established*
 - (D) To the extent not otherwise required by Texas Government Code, Chapter 551 or other state or federal law or rule, all temporary and permanent boards, commissions, and task forces not included in this chapter and that are established solely by council shall comply with Chapter 551 (*Open Meetings Act*). This subsection does not apply to working groups.

TOMA and Quorum

- Resolution No. 20170413-027 *City Manager Search Advisory Task Force*: "A quorum for the conduct of business is a majority of task force members."
- City Code Section 2-1-6(A) states: "A majority of the total number of authorized board members constitutes a quorum for the conduct of business. For an 11 member board, six board members constitute a quorum."
 - The quorum is based on the number of total seats, not the number of members currently appointed or serving. Quorum will always be 6 members for an 11 member body.
- City Code Section 2-1-6(B) states: "For an 11 member board, a board action must be adopted by an affirmative vote of six board members."

Meetings and TOMA

- All meetings are required to be recorded by an audio recorder or televised by ATXN.
- The recordings are kept for 90 days after board minutes are approved.
- Some meetings are televised but very few.
- Meeting schedules are posted on each board's webpage.

Board Meeting Schedule

- The task force will adopt a schedule at its first regular meeting.
- This must be an action item on the agenda.
- When setting calendar, please consider holidays.
- Please provide the approved schedule to BC Coordinator so that we may publish it on the webpage.

Member Attendance

- While task forces are not subject to the same attendance requirements as permanent City boards, member attendance is required in order to complete the task force's mission.
- If attendance issues arise, please notify the BC Coordinator so that we can work with Council to resolve the issue.

Liaisons

- Complete classroom training for the online posting system (BCIC Utility)
- Post agendas and all supporting documents using BCIC and in compliance with the Open Meetings Act
- Prepare action minutes and posts the approved minutes using BCIC in a timely manner. (This is not a complete transcript or verbatim minutes.)
- Report changes to meeting schedules and member resignations
- Schedule meetings including making room arrangements. Release rooms if cancellations occur.

Liaisons

- Ensure the task force complies with deadlines and Code provisions.
- Encourage the task force to remain within their mission statement.
- Advise compliance with Texas Open Meetings Act:
 - No discussion, formal or informal, among a quorum of members except at a posted meeting. This includes discussing an item, cumulatively, with a quorum of members.
 - Discuss only items on the agenda.
 - If an item (not on the agenda) requires further discussion, include it on future agenda.
- Support, advise, and provide resources, as needed. A liaison may be called upon for discussion.

Task Force Officers

- Resolution No. 20170413-027
 - "...the Mayor's appointee being named as Chair and Mayor Pro Tem's appointee being named as Vice Chair."

Code of Conduct

- Each person and task force member attending a meeting should observe decorum.
- A person or member should not speak out of turn, use disparaging or abusive language, or make threats of violence against any other person during a board meeting.
- The presiding officer:
 - should maintain order;
 - should exercise the officer's authority impartially; and
 - may shorten a person's speaking time or ban a person from speaking for the duration of a meeting only for a violation of decorum set out in this section.

Agendas – Established Process

- Agendas are compiled by the liaison with input from the task force members, and department staff.
- Established protocol for 2-1 boards is that members may include an item if:
 - Sponsorship is received from two or more members and provided 5 calendar days before the meeting.
 - The item is requested during a meeting under "New Business-Future Agenda Items" from two or more members.
 - Chair approves the final agenda.

Agendas

- Agendas must be written so that a reasonable person may understand what the task force intends to discuss.
- Agendas include all issues to be considered and any action or vote scheduled.
 - Example: "Discussion and possible action on"
- Established protocol for COA deliberative bodies is to provide for General Citizen Communication on all agendas.
 - Citizen Communication does not have to occur at the same time from meeting to meeting.

Agendas and TOMA

- A task force will not be able to hold a planned meeting if an Agenda, which complies with Texas Open Meetings Act requirements, is not properly and timely posted.

Meeting Minutes

The Texas Open Meetings Act and City Code require that written action minutes be taken of all meetings.

- Written minutes are not a transcript of every word of the meeting.

The liaison will take the minutes of the meetings. The liaison will record the events of the meeting using action minutes and include:

- the members in attendance;
- the subject of each deliberation; and
- each vote, order, decision, or other action taken.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes are approved by the task force and posted to BCIC and retained permanently.

- Members may vote to approve minutes of a meeting they did not attend.

Minutes will be posted using the online posting system (BCIC) so the public can see them.

All meetings should be recorded. Recordings are retained for 90 days after approval of minutes.

Cancellation Notices

- There is no TOMA requirement for posting cancellation notices, although remember that all TOMA posting requirements are meant to benefit the public in their awareness that a meeting is to be held. Since a meeting notice will already have been posted, you should post the cancellation notice as soon as possible after becoming aware that a meeting must be cancelled, in order to give the public the earliest possible knowledge that a meeting will in fact not be taking place.

Community Interest Announcements

Community Interest Announcements are posted for celebratory events and ribbon cuttings where a quorum of the task force may be present.

Public Information Requests

- Please be mindful of sending emails regarding task force business.
- If a Public Information Request is submitted for information from task force members, we will ask the members to review their personal email addresses for any responsive information.

Things to Know

- The City Code prohibits task forces from meeting in closed executive session unless they have received prior written approval from the city attorney.

Boards and Commissions Team

Aaron Mendonsa – Administrative Specialist

aaron.mendonsa@austintexas.gov

512-974-9005

Deena Estrada – Boards & Commissions Coordinator

deena.estrada@austintexas.gov

512-974-2497

Questions?

